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The Illinois State Archives...

ILLINOIS DOCUMENTS

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ILLINOIS STATE LIBRARY



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***George H. Ryan
Secretary of State
and State Archivist***

... Documenting and Sharing 250 Years of History.

When you step into the Illinois State Archives, the past is no longer behind you — it is before you. Historic photographs and government documents give historians, researchers, genealogists and others a true picture of life more than two centuries ago.

An early 1920s photograph of children weaving baskets in a small schoolhouse illustrates the dress, decor and educational atmosphere of the period, in comparison with those of today.

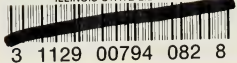
Archives' programs such as "Illinois at War, 1941-1945" and "Early Chicago"



attempt to bring local history into today's classroom. Through them the State Archives provides Illinois teachers with facsimiles of historic local government documents and explanatory texts to be used as teaching aids. The intent is to help students understand and relate to Illinois as it was in the past.

Historic photographs and government documents which provide the key to Illinois' past are found within bookshelves, microfilm and card catalogs throughout the Margaret Cross Norton Building. The Illinois State Archives uses modern conveniences to help take you back 250 years.

ILLINOIS STATE LIBRARY





The spring of 1995 brought an important first to state government: A government administrative building was named after a woman.

The honoree is Margaret Cross Norton, who first organized Illinois' collection of historic government documents — and the building is now known as the Margaret Cross Norton Building.

Norton was a pioneer in the archives profession, winning a national reputation in the 35 years that she served as superintendent of the Illinois Archives. But perhaps Norton's crowning achievement was construction of the Archives Building, which was built to her specifications. It is here, at the Margaret Cross Norton Building, that you will find some 250 years of our state's history, including Illinois Constitutions, militia rolls, and poll books.

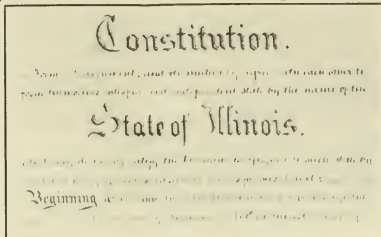
I am pleased that this building bears the name of the woman whose life was dedicated to preserving Illinois' heritage, and I urge you to explore the information it contains. Whether visiting in person or requesting information by mail or telephone, the Archives is here to help you open a window on Illinois' rich past.

George H. Ryan
Secretary of State
and State Archivist

DOCUMENTING HISTORY

The Archives' reference staff handles more than 125,000 public information requests a year. Each year restoration technicians treat some 45,000 documents which have deteriorated from age, use or mistreatment. Through its efficient management, security and restoration procedures, the State Archives is preserving and immortalizing Illinois' past. This careful preservation gives the public access to thousands of government documents including those pertaining to:

- Education
- Labor issues
- Transportation
- Vital statistics
- County histories
- Public land sales
- The Illinois Territory
- Banking and state finance
- Federal and state censuses
- Veterans' and military affairs
- The Illinois and Michigan Canal
- Law enforcement and corrections
- Mental health and social service agencies
- Internal improvement and public works projects
- Persons who served in the Indian Wars, Black Hawk War, Mexican War, Civil War and Spanish-American War



SHARING RESOURCES

Working with the Local Records Commissions and local officials, the State Archives transfers valuable records to seven state universities through the Illinois Regional Archives Depository System (IRAD). Relocation of local records to archival facilities across the state makes the records more accessible to researchers and prevents their loss or physical deterioration.

IRAD centers include Eastern Illinois University, Illinois State University, Northeastern Illinois University, Northern Illinois University, Southern Illinois University, Western Illinois University and the University of Illinois at Springfield. Records stored at each depository reflect the history and traditions of that particular region.

BUILDING THE ARCHIVES

The Margaret Cross Norton Building was constructed from 1936 to 1938 specifically as the official repository of state documents of permanent value. Prior to its construction, valuable military records were kept in the State Arsenal, located at the site of the present State Armory in Springfield. In February 1934, a 10-year-old boy set the Arsenal on fire, destroying many of the military documents and records.

Following the Arsenal fire, Secretary of State Edward Hughes supported legislation to construct the State Archives building. The limestone-faced building was designed to protect the state's valuable historic and semi-current records from the hazards of fire, dampness, excessive heat, vermin, theft and exposure.





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**Illinois State Archives
Margaret Cross Norton Building
Springfield, Illinois 62756
(217) 782-4682**

The building is open:
Weekdays: 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Saturday: 8 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

The Archives is closed on all state holidays and holiday weekends.
